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ABSTRACT

This study examined the career patterns of secondary school business education teachers, focusing on possible demographic differences between teachers who sought alternate career paths and those who did not. A stratified national sample of 284 business teachers completed a survey questionnaire. The study found that the typical respondent was a white female, 44 years old, married, with 1.66 children, who had a Master's degree, 17 years of teaching experience, and was teaching keyboarding or computer literacy/applications. Seventy-six percent of the respondents' careers started from 3 different points in life: (1) with a Bachelor's degree; (2) working for a business; or (3) military service. The most frequently identified pattern was for an individual to obtain a Bachelor's degree and certification (n=108), accept a teaching position (n=44), obtain a Master's degree while continuing to teach (n=52), and accept administrative duties (n=12). The study also found that slightly less than half of the respondents were currently seeking an alternative career route (48.6 percent), while slightly more than half (51.4 percent) were not. A significant number of those in the former category were under 35 years of age. (Contains 14 references.) (MDM)

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# A CAREER IN TEACHING BUSINESS EDUCATION

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by

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**A Career in Teaching Business Education**

*Abstract*

*The study of career patterns is important for better understanding of the behavior, perceptions, and occupational culture of school teachers (Maclean, 1992). It provides valuable insights into the occupation, the individual, and society. Studies exploring careers of teachers are limited in range and number. Literature review indicated that teachers are leaving the profession at all experience levels.*

*The purpose of this study was to examine career patterns of business education teachers and if there was a difference between those secondary business education teachers who seek alternative career routes and those who do not on selected demographic characteristics. Respondents were from each of the 50 states in the U.S. and the District of Columbia. Out of 304 (41%) responses received, research finding analysis was based on an adjusted sample of 284 (38%) response rate. A defined career pattern emerged from the study. A statistically significant difference was found between those seeking alternative careers and those who are not on two demographic variables: age and geographic location.*

## Introduction

Knowledge about teachers' satisfaction with their work conditions, with teaching generally, teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward students, schools, colleagues, and the profession are of interest to researchers and policymakers as they seek to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers' career plans will affect future teacher supply and demand (NCES, 1993.) Lortie (1973) drew attention to an odd gap in knowledge about teachers. "We have too few studies which explore the subjective world of teachers in terms of their conception of what is salient" (p. 490). The study of career patterns is important in providing valuable insights into the occupation, the individual, and society.

Little data is available regarding status of business education teachers at the secondary level. According to Yaworski (1974), business educators should continually evaluate professional and related fields as part of their total occupational development. Individuals need to be knowledgeable about the attributes of possible careers and also of the transferability of careers. Yaworski (1974) recommended that a study be conducted of secondary and postsecondary business education teachers to determine the degree of satisfaction with the occupation or profession. More studies of business teacher educators need to be conducted to better understand business educators' work attitudes (Schafer & Echternacht, 1992).

## Objectives of the Study

This study sought to analyze career patterns of secondary-level business education teachers in the U. S. Research questions for the study included: (1) What is the career pattern of secondary business education teachers? and (2) Is there a difference between those secondary business education teachers who seek alternative career routes and those who do not on selected demographic characteristics?

## Literature Review

A summary of the literature and related research on teaching in general and business education teaching revealed: (1) Teaching is relatively unstaged (Lortie, 1975). (2) Opportunity for advancement in teaching is limited. Teachers seeking higher salaries must leave teaching or move into administration (Lortie, 1975; Cutlip & Shockley, 1988). (3) Teaching is still not recognized as a profession In order

to enhance the professional status of teachers, working conditions must be improved; a professional hierarchy needs to be developed; teachers must be empowered to make decisions; and low salary schedules need to be upgraded (Wise, 1995; NCES, 1993; Boyer, 1992; Carnegie Forum, 1986; Altbach, 1985). (4) Teaching has been dominated by women, and administration by men. Teaching is considered women's work, which has affected the status of teaching and self-image of teachers. This cultural sex-role stereotyping is still perpetuated today (U.S. Department of Education, 1993; Cutlip & Shockley, 1988; Feimen-Nemser & Floden, 1986). (5) There is a paucity of research regarding teachers' careers and even less literature pertains to business education teachers. (6) The number of business education teachers has declined appreciably over the years. Business education teachers are leaving the profession at all experience levels (Anderson-Yates & Diggle, 1995).

## Research Procedure

Using a descriptive design with the survey method, the study was conducted among secondary-level business education teachers in the U. S. Using a stratified random sampling procedure, 15 high schools from each state as identified in The College Board Guide to High Schools (1990) were selected for the sample (750). The stratification was by state and by private/public high school status. The researcher-developed instrument was sent to the principal of each of the high schools in the sample with a request to ask a representative business education teacher from their staff to complete the instrument. Respondents were from each of the 50 states in the U.S. and the District of Columbia. Out of 304 (41%) responses received, research finding analysis was based on an adjusted sample of 284 (38%) response rate. From two to 11 responses were received from each state.

Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, t-tests, standardized residuals, and Chi-square analyses. The .05 level of significance was used.

## Findings

The typical business education teacher responding in this study was: a white female, 44 years of age; married with 1.66 children; holding a master's degree; having 17 years of teaching experience; teaching keyboarding or computer literacy/applications; and a member of the National Education Association.

A defined career pattern of business education teachers emerged from this study. The majority (216 or 76%) of the business teachers' career started from three different points of life: (1) career starting with a bachelor's degree--171; (2) career starting working for business--37; and (3) career starting with military service--8. Career paths of the other 68 (24%) were erratic.

Figure 1 shows the most frequently identified pattern that emerged. It presents that 108 respondents obtained a bachelor's degree and concurrently met certification requirements; 44 accepted a teaching position next; and 52 obtained a master's degree while continuing to teach; and 12 accepted administrative duties. Figure 2 shows the career pattern of 37 respondents who started their career working for business. The career pattern of those 8 individuals who started their career with military service is depicted in Figure 3.

# Career Starting With B.S./Certification

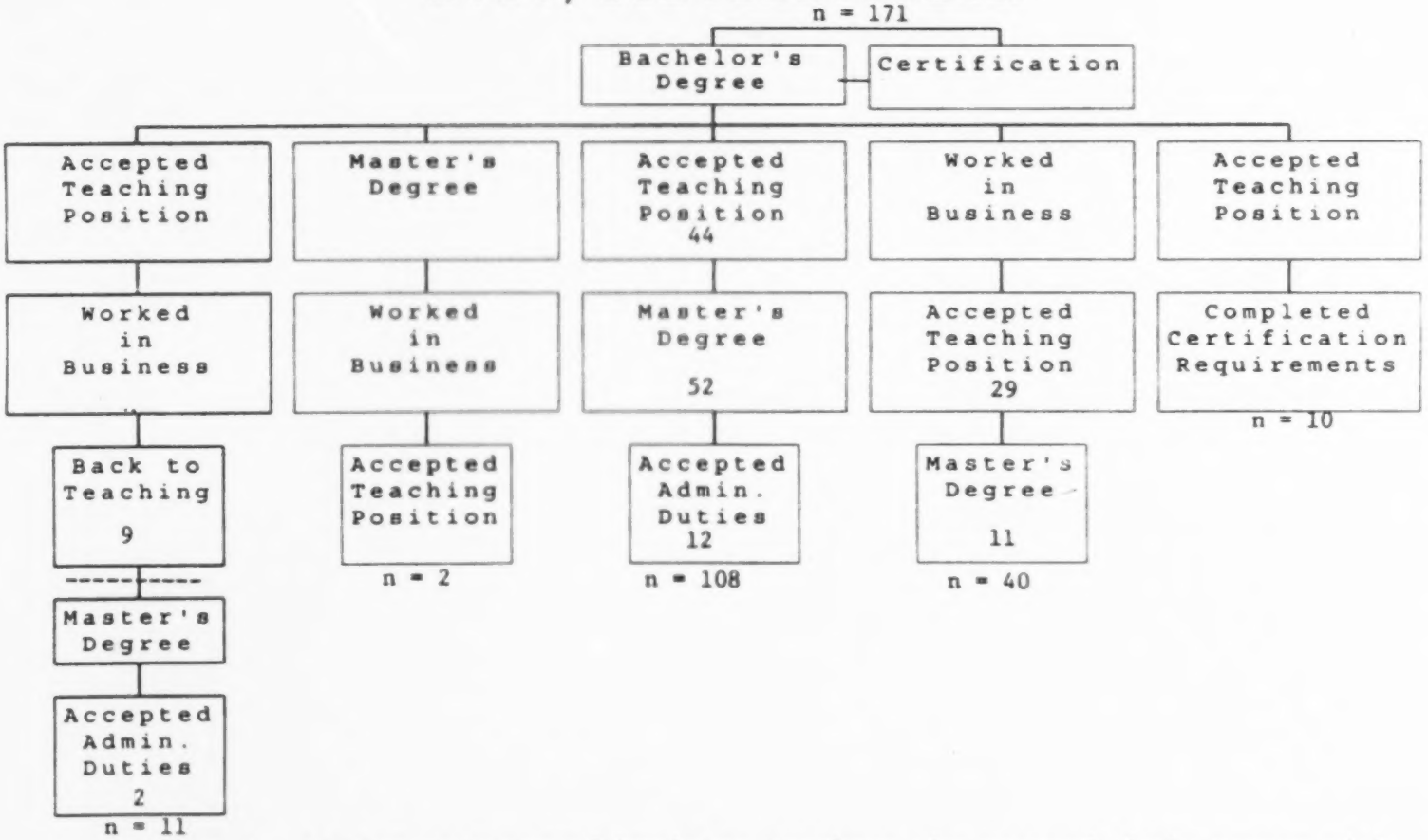


Figure 1. Career patterns of business teachers who started their career with B.S. degree /teacher certification

# Career Starting Working for Business

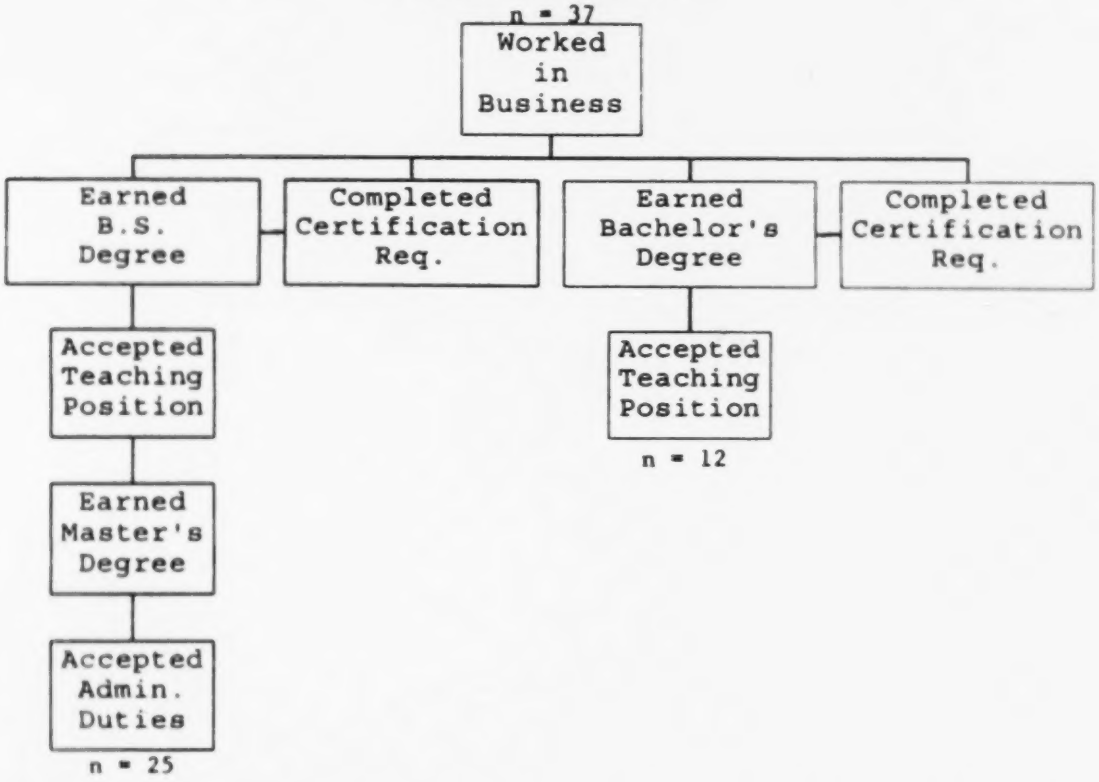


Figure 2. Career patterns of business teachers who started their career working for business.

# Career Starting With Military Service

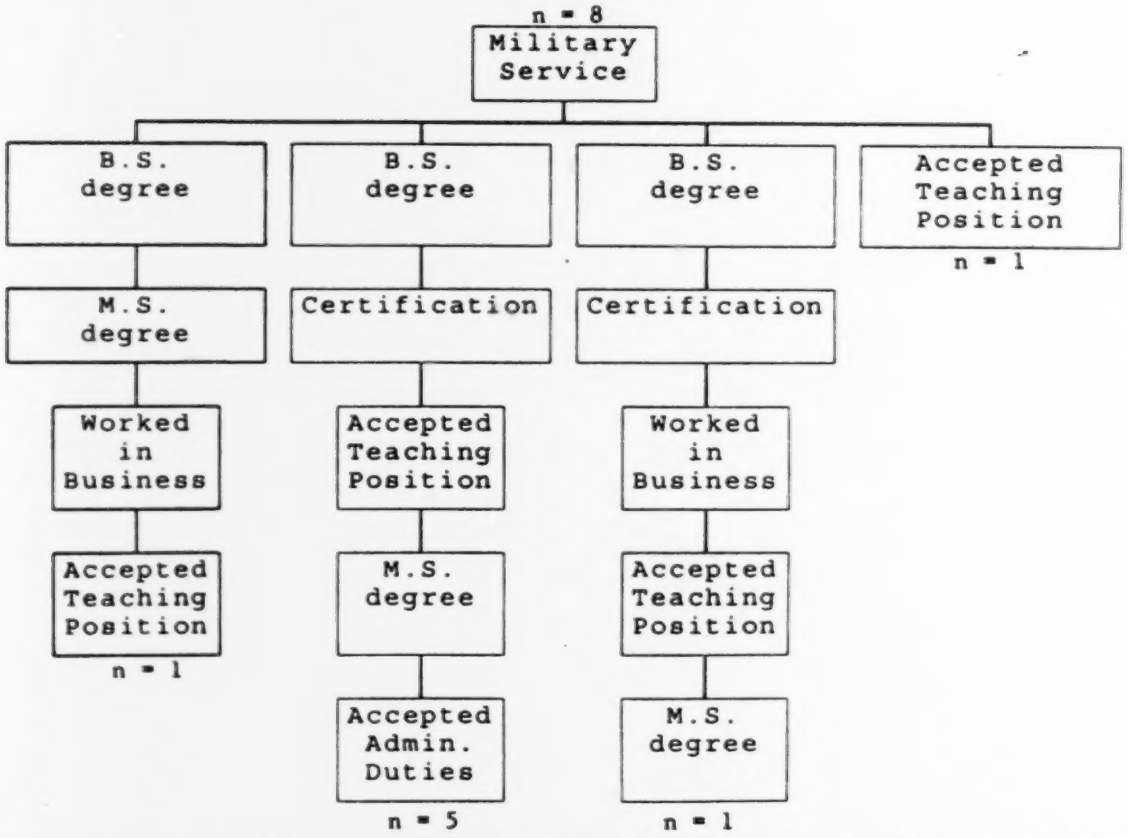


Figure 3. Career patterns of business teachers who started their career with military service

Table 1 and 2 show that a statistically significant difference was found between those seeking alternative careers and those not seeking on two demographic variables: age and geographic location. About half (48.6%) of the business teachers are seeking an alternative career route while half (51.4%) are not.

Table 1 describes results of the chi-square analysis and shows a statistically significant difference in age between those who are seeking alternative career routes and those who are not. The 35 or less age group were those seeking alternative careers.

Table 1.

Chi-Square Analysis of Seekers and Nonseekers by Age

| Age Group | Seekers n | % | R | Nonseekers n | % | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35 or less | 46 | 69.70 | 2.46* | 20 | 30.30 | -2.39* |
| 36-40 | 13 | 46.43 | -0.16 | 15 | 53.57 | 0.15 |
| 41-45 | 15 | 33.33 | -1.46 | 30 | 66.67 | 1.42 |
| 46-50 | 32 | 45.71 | -0.34 | 38 | 54.29 | 0.33 |
| 51+ | 31 | 42.47 | -0.75 | 42 | 57.53 | 0.72 |
| Total | 137 | | | 145 | | |

Note. *>|1.96| Chi-square (4,n = 282) = 17.34, p = 0.002

Table 2 shows statistically significant difference between seekers and nonseekers by geographic region. Fifty (35%) respondents from the South indicated they were not seeking alternative career routes.

Table 2.

Geographic Distribution of Seekers and Nonseekers

| Geographic Region | Seekers n | % | R | Nonseekers n | % | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| East | 30 | 21.9 | 0.71 | 24 | 16.7 | -0.69 |
| Midwest | 38 | 27.7 | 0.23 | 37 | 25.7 | -0.23 |
| South | 27 | 19.7 | -1.72 | 50 | 34.7 | -1.67* |
| West | 42 | 30.7 | 0.89 | 33 | 22.9 | 0.87 |
| Total | 137 | 100.0 | | 144 | 100.0 | |

Note. *|1.96| Chi-square (3, n = 281) = 8.46, p = 0.037

No statistically significant difference was found between seekers and nonseekers in the other demographic variables such as gender, race, marital status, or number of children.

## Conclusions

This study provided a valuable insight into the occupation and the society. Study of career patterns of business education teachers would help to better understand the profession and teachers' work attitude to predict teacher supply and demand for the future. Business education teachers are leaving the profession at all experience levels.

About half of the business education teachers are seeking alternative career routes. Age and geographic location are significant factors contributing to business education teachers seeking alternative career routes.

## Recommendations

Recommendations included: (1) Additional research is needed to study career patterns of secondary business education teachers to better understand the occupation and to predict teacher supply and demand; (2) Analysis of career development opportunities for secondary business education teachers should be conducted; and (3) Qualitative research should be used to identify problems faced by business education teachers that affects their professional life and the profession as a whole.

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